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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 IO-06 PM-03 SP-02
L-01 PRS-01 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 EUR-08 /052 W
----------221922 001730 /53
R 221815Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4231
INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY CARACAS
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
USMISSION USUN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 GEORGETOWN 0380

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, GY
SUBJECT: GOG EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH US

SUMMARY: FONMIN WILLS HAS GONE OUT OF HIS WAY IN RECENT WEEKS TO SHOW THAT HE WISHES TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HIS WORDS TO US CONCERNING THAT HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY REPORTED. SOME OTHER CABINET MINISTERS ALSO HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT THEY TOO WANT IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS. THEIR INTENT HAS BEEN EXPRESSED IN VARIOUS WAYS INCLUDING GESTURES AT SOCIAL OCCASIONS, SUCH AS THE ACCORDANCE TO THE US CHARGE OF PRECEDENCE OVER AMBASSADORS AT AN EVENT HONORING PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM. (THIS BREACH OF PROTOCOL BY THE GOG HAS BEEN PROTESTED BY THE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR.) PRESS COVERAGE OF THINGS US ALSO HAS IMPROVED
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NOTICEABLY DURING THE PAST THREE WEEKS. BUT DESPITE THESE SURFACE MANIFESTATIONS, WE HAVE INDICATIONS THAT THE LEFTWARD MOMENTUM OF RECENT MONTHS STILL CONTINUES AND THAT NOT ALL OF THE PNC POLITICOS ARE HAPPY OVER WILLS' EFFORTS TO COURT THE US. MOREOVER, THE GOG'S POLITICAL STRATEGY OF COAXING OPPOSITION LEADER CHEDDI JAGAN

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INTO ITS TENT AND/OR CUTTING HIM OFF FROM INTERNAL
AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT CONTINUES AND OBVIOUSLY
CONFLICTS WITH THE EFFORTS TO COURT THE US. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS MESSAGE PROVIDES SOME INDICATION OF THE
OVERALL MANNER IN WHICH THE GOG, PRIMARILY FONMIN
WILLS APPARENTLY WITH BURNHAM'S CONCURRENCE, HAS BEEN
MAKING KNOWN ITS DESIRE TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH
THE US. I HAVE REPORTED THE SUBSTANCE OF MOST OF
MY CONVERSATIONS WITH WILLS, BUT IT HAS BECOME
CLEAR THAT ALL SIGNALS ARE NOT ENCOMPASSED IN WORDS ALONE.

2. WILLS HAS INVITED ME TO HIS OFFICE REGULARLY AND
HAS BEEN IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE WHEN I HAVE SOUGHT
HIM OUT. AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, HE CAME TO LUNCH
AT MY HOUSE, A GESTURE WHICH HE NORMALLY HAS NOT
MADE WITH DIPLOMATS. LAST FRIDAY (FEB 18), I WAS
THE ONLY NON-COMMONWEALTH DIPLOMAT INVITED TO A
RECEPTION WILLS HOSTED FOR COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY
GENERAL SONNY RAMPHAL. ON FEBRUARY 20, AT A
CULTURAL PRESENTATION AT GUYANA'S CULTURE CENTER IN
HONOR OF PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM ON HIS 54TH
BIRTHDAY, FOR WHICH THE MEMBERS OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS
RECEIVED NUMBERED TICKETS WITH PREASSIGNED SEATING,
I AND MY WIFE WERE SEATED IN THE FRONT ROW DIRECTLY
BESIDE WILLS. WITH THIS GESTURE, HOWEVER, WILLS HAS
PROVOKED THIS IRE OF THE VENEZUELAN AMBASSADOR WHO HAS
CIRCULATED A NOTICE PROTESTING THE GOG'S BREACH OF PROTOCOL
IN GIVING A CHARGE PRECEDENCE OVER AMBASSADORS.
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3. OTHER MINISTERS INCLUDING MINISTER OF COOPERATIVES
AND NATIONAL MOBILIZATION HAMILTON GREEN, MINISTER OF
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES HUBERT JACK, AND MINISTER
OF AGRICULTURE GAVIN KENNARD, HAVE RECEIVED ME
CORDIALLY (KENNARD HOSTED A DINNER FOR ME FOLLOWING MY
RETURN) AND HAVE EMPHATICALLY EXPRESSED THEIR HOPES
FOR AN IMPROVED US/GUYANESE RELATIONSHIP. THE ONLY
COOLNESS I HAVE NOTED HAS BEEN FROM
DESMOND HOYT MINISTER OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WILLS
HAS TOLD ME THAT HOYT, EVEN MORE THAN BURNHAM, WAS
ANGERED BY THE US CHARACTERIZATION OF BURNHAM'S
SPEECH AS "BALD FACE LIES," AND THAT HIS STUBBORNESS
HAS NOT ALLOWED HIS FEELINGS TO ABATE.

4. DURING THE PAST THREE WEEKS ANTI-US ARTICLES HAVE
DISAPPEARED FROM THE PRESS AND INCREASING
USE HAS BEEN MADE OF AP WIRE SERVICE ARTICLES IN
COMPARISON WITH CUBAN AND SOVIET RELEASES. MUCH OF THE

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COVERAGE OF US ORIENTED SUBJECTS HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN NON-POLITICAL. AN EXCEPTION HAS BEEN THE RATHER EXTENSIVE COVERAGE OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S TRIP TO AFRICA.

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5. COMMENT: DESPITE WILLS' OBVIOUS GESTURES TO SHOW GOG DESIRE TO IMPROVE USG-GOG RELATIONS, ASSERTIONS TO ME BY OTHER CABINET MINISTERS AND LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS CONCERNING THEIR DESIRES FOR IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE US, AND THE DISAPPEARANCE FROM MEDIA OF ANTI-US ARTICLES, THE SUBTERRANEAN POLITICAL CURRENT HERE WITHIN THE PNC IS STILL RUNNING LEFTWARD. REPORTEDLY NOT ALL PNC LEADERS ARE PLEASED OVER WILLS' EFFORTS TO COURT THE US. THE GOG RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA STILL THRIVES. APPARENTLY GUYANESE LEADERS BELIEVE THEY CAN IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE US WHILE MAINTAINING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH CUBA AND OTHER COMMUNIST NATIONS. FROM ALL APPEARANCES, BURNHAM HAS GIVEN WILLS THE TASK OF IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH TUE US, ALTHOUGH THIS EFFORT RUNS COUNTER TO THEIR CONCURRENT EFFORTS TO NEUTRALIZE JAGAN BY UNDERMINING HIS LEFTIST SUPPORT
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AND PERSUADING THE CUBANS AND SOVIETS TO INDUCE JAGAN
INTO MEANINGFUL COOPERATION WITH THE GOG.
IT SEEMS THE GUYANESE LEADERS ARE ENGAGED IN A
POLITICAL TIGHTROPE ACT WHICH COULD BE UPSET AT
ANY MOMENT.
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